Poster boys for 25 years

Film *Murder*, one of the posters created by the duo

■ **Geety Sahgal,** *Andheri*

FROM *Sholay, Khuda Gawah, Parinda, Aashiqui* to *Murder*, designer duo Atmanand and Vivek have created an impressive array of publicity posters for films. It is twenty-five years since they launched Studio Link their poster designing studio, and it is amazing how they have kept up the tempo in their profession.

Today is yet another busy day in their lives. Just back from Satara, where he got on-location pictures of Ajay Devgan and Nana Patekar for Prakash Jha's *Apaharan* – Atmanand is busy giving finishing touches to the publicity posters, while partner Vivek supervises finer detailing like colour, brightness and look of the design.

"Poster publicity jobs are always a matter of urgency," explains Atma. "We are at it 24x7." Passion for movies is the driving force behind their creations.

Both have been movie buffs since childhood. Their earlier influences can be traced back to their respective uncles, while Atmanand's uncle used to be a well known still-photographer in Hindi films, Vivek's uncle was a dressman.

Both of them grew up with stars in their eyes. Atma completed Commercial Art from the J.J.School of Arts, while Vivek pursued his family business of painting and designing.

Later they joined leading publicity designer, C Mohan and learnt the job hands on. "We were fortunate to work with film stalwarts of all times. From *Sholay* to *Rajnigandha*, we designed posters for the entire spectrum of movies at that time," Atma points out.

According to them whilst designing a poster the most vital aspect is its 'layout and composition.' As designers, they must be able to project the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the film. It can't just be the star value. Even in a Shah Rukh film, the poster must convey that it is a suspense thriller.

"The latest example is *Murder*, where we deliberately avoided use of blood or weapon in the poster. Even the lettering is bold and black, it is Mallika all over.

The campaign had an element of surprise which worked," remarks Vivek.

Atma - Vivek

Atma-Vivek have enjoyed long lasting friendships with their clients. Kishor Kumar got all his publicity poster designed by them. Mukesh Bhat of Vishesh Films swears by them. And they have worked on 40 films with them.

From *Kabja, Sadak, Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin, Tamanna, Murder, Zeher* and their latest *Blue Film*. "It's a very long association," admits Atma. Likewise, their *Parinda* poster with the pigeon motif worked marvels. "Makers like Vidhu Vinod Chopra inspire you to do extraordinary work," says Vivek.

They have designed posters in English, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Punjabi. Their creative endeavors have won them trophies and awards – three Screen Awards for the posters of *Hazar Chaurasi Ki Maa, Vaastav* and *Aankhen* and Maharashtra State Award for Amol Palekar's *Anaahat*. They also won an International Award at an Indo German competition for designing a Calendar entitled *Journey of Life*.

So are they now training their sights on filmmaking? "You never know, we have been mulling over that idea for some time now," they say giving a *dekko* to the just-approved designs of Ajay-Nana starrer *Apaharan*.

59 year old wins Veterans' Table Tennis tournament

All for table tennis

C M Murthy

■ **Apurva Bhatt,** *Borivali*

AT 59, C Mallikarjun Murthy gets up everyday at 5, goes for a jog, and does his yoga and weights before he heads to the gymkhana to play table tennis.

Recently at the All India National Table Tennis Championship, held at Andheri Sports Complex, C M Murthy, preferred to played back-to-back finals (in the 50 plus cate gory) and came out victorious.

In the singles, C M Murthy defeated A S Shaikh of Maharashtra with great ease, 11-5, 11-2 and 11-3.

And after a gap of two hours he played the veterans doubles final partnering with his friend Z N Khandaria and defeated the pair of N A Krishnaswamy and K Oberoi of Karnataka, 11-7, 11-8, 11-13 and 11-2.

"I was not at all tired playing two finals on the same day. Table Tennis gives me the satisfaction, which I don't get anywhere else," informs Murthy.

"Today there are more senior citizens taking up to table tennis, than youngsters. I am totally involved with the game. In fact I have started coaching at various clubs and gymkhana around Borivali"

"I was not at all tired playing two finals on the same day. Table Tennis gives me the satisfaction, which I don't get anywhere else," informs Murthy.

The former State Bank of India (SBI) employee has been playing table tennis for the last 45 years.

"I started playing from the age of 8. At that time we did not have coaches, so I picked up the game by myself. I still remember, I lost in the quarterfinals at a tournament held at Indian Gymkhana, Matunga. That was my first competitive tournament," recalls Murthy. But that didn't stop Murthy from quitting the game.

He (C M Murthy) moved to Chennai when he was 9. "I didn't leave the game when I moved to Chennai. In fact I was the junior national champion there and continued playing," informs Murthy.

In 1962, he came back to Mumbai and joined State Bank of India, as a TT player. He represented SBI for 30 long years. Even after retiring Murthy didn't quit the game.

"Today there are more senior citizens taking up to table tennis, than youngsters. I am totally involved with the game.

In fact I have started coaching at various clubs and gymkhana around Borivali," adds Murthy. And what keeps the 59-year-old going?

"The game has given me everything. I cannot live without table tennis. I want to devote my entire life towards this game," he concludes.

apurva.bhatt@timesgroup.com

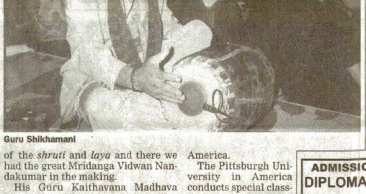
Guru of all musical things

■ **Sudha Subramaniam,** *Malad*

GURU Shikhamani Sruti Laya Sudhakara Swar Sadhana Ratna Vidwan Shri T.S. Nandakumar is an ardent musician and Guru rolled into one. He imparts the difficult art of mastering *Aanandadhi Vadyas'* (percussion instruments) with an ease of methodology, a play of pace and *Aksharakalas'* so that even a child with a certain amount of calculative acumen can grasp it.

A child prodigy, Guru Nandakumar had only his talent, and not riches, with which he conquered the world of music with his passionate beats on the *mridangam*. His lineage can be traced to the renowned family of musicians, the Ambalapuzha Brothers.

The great Guru Kaithavana Madhava Das discerned the child's rhythm perception, his terrific grasp of the *shruti* and *laya* and there we had the great Mridanga Vidwan Nandakumar in the making.


Guru Shikhamani

His Guru Kaithavana Madhava Das under the ancient Indian *'Gurukula Samprada System'* groomed Guru Nandakumar where the student lives with his Guru throughout the time of learning in the Gurukul or Ashram.

A background that he always acknowledges till date. When R.K.Laxman felicitated Guru Nandakumar and asked him the secret of his success, he said he owed it to his humble beginnings, his parents and his guru.

For more than two decades, Guru Nandakumar can also boast of being an 'A' grade artist of All India Radio.

His performances span the length and breadth of India as well as overseas in places like Germany and America.

Some of his noted students include Paula Jeanie (New York-*kanjira*), Geom (France-*morsingh*), Will Calhoun (New York-*kanjira* and *konnakkol*), Caroline (Australia-*konnakkol*), Todd Isler (Manhattan-*kanjira*) are some of his noted students

The Pittsburgh University in America conducts special classes in percussive arts for which they have managed to enlist Guru Nandakumar himself. He spends about four months in America for this cause. He flew on May 22nd and is scheduled to return in September.

Like the man, his apartment at Malad reveals an unassuming and a simple bent of mind.

His students are 'A'grade artists themselves and accolades have been swarming in for them from all over the globe, including the United Kingdom, Japan, U.S.A, Australia and France come and learn the percussive arts from him.

Some of his noted students include Paula Jeanie (New York-*kanjira*),Geom (France-*morsingh*), Will Calhoun (New York-*kanjira* and *konnakkol*), Caroline (Australia-*konnakkol*), Todd Isler (Manhattan-*kanjira*) are some of his noted students.

Guru Nandakumar is a recipient of several awards including the Sangeet Natak Academy award. He has played for renowned top ranking artists like Shri Shemamgudi Srinivasa Iyer, Dr.Balamurali Krishna, Pt.Bhimsen Joshi, Prof.T.N.Krishnan, Dr.N.Rajam, Dr.N.Ramani, Sri T.K.Govinda Rao, Hyderabad Brothers, Sri K.S.Gopalakrishnan, Sri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy and others.

Besides his work at the All India Radio, cutting albums like Jewels of Rhythm, he also founded the TSN's Percussive Arts Centre in 1998.

When the Tsunami disaster struck, he conducted an *Akhanda Natha Seva*, a 24-hour non-stop musical prayer to pray for the well-being and safety of those affected.

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Media man moves to movies

■ **A Correspondent,** *Goregaon*

JAIRAJ Padmanabhan, AVP- Media, Lowe Lintas quit a cushy corporate job a year back after 10 years in the media business, to chase his passion of making movies, something that he has dreamed since childhood. Jairaj describes his debut movie *'U, Bomsi n Me'* as a metro, Hinglish, musical romantic comedy, a funny take on marriage, relationships & the stress that comes along.

Written and directed by him *'U, Bomsi n Me'* as the title suggests, takes you into the lives of three married guys, of which one is a Parsee, one a Tamilian and one a half-Punjabi half-Gujarati, all working in an FM radio station.

Jairaj Padmanabhan

The DINK (Double income, no kids) couples are in their first two years of marriage trying to maintain a balance in their marital and professional lives in the backdrop of a throbbing urban set up. The film is all about exploring romance within marriage along with meeting their targets at work.

The film stars Bobby Bahal, Gautam Rode (model), Vivek Madan (*Close-up* toothpaste Ad), Sonal Sehgal, Vidya Malavde and Kranti Redkar.

Jairaj teams up with actor-producer Bobby Bahal, who has also produced *'Dhoop'*, a critically acclaimed film starring Revathi, Om Puri & Sanjay Suri, released in 2003. *Dhoop* was rated as the 7th best film of 2003 by India Today.

Bobby Bahal is also playing one of the main leads in the film. Writing had always been a passion for Jairaj, be it writing business presentations or short stories or movie scripts.

So when Bobby Bahal offered him to direct *'U, Bomsi n Me'* too, Jairaj just couldn't refuse.

What after this? Jairaj has written three more scripts, each one of a different genre all waiting to be produced.

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